

MARKUS BURGER PRESENTS

SPIRITUAL  STANDARDS

spiritual standards

Where chorales and Christian hymns
meet the 21st century.



MARKUS BURGER · PIANO / JAN VON KLEWITZ · SAXOPHONE

Concerts · Cultural diplomacy · Education

A tradition made personal.

Beloved melodies by Bach, Handel and Luther, reimagined with warmth, depth and feeling.



Photo: © Diana Unt Photography

THE CONCERT EXPERIENCE

Familiar melodies. A new way of listening.

Spiritual Standards brings together pianist Markus Burger and saxophonist Jan von Klewitz in music that is contemplative, lyrical and alive with improvisation. Chorales and hymns retain their identity as new harmonies, textures and spontaneous exchanges reveal fresh possibilities.

The repertoire connects Bach and the sacred tradition with the expressive freedom of jazz. It offers listeners a recognizable point of entry and the excitement of hearing familiar music unfold in the moment.

The duo has performed for the German Foreign Service and the Goethe-Institut in Europe and the Americas, Markus Burger served as Musical Ambassador of the Luther Decade in the United States from 2013 to 2016.

THE PERSONAL BEGINNING

Music as a source of strength

Markus Burger created Spiritual Standards while facing a life-threatening illness. The chorales and the spiritual nature of the source material gave him great strength.

That experience remains at the heart of the project: music as a place of reflection, resilience and connection. Its spiritual foundations are deeply personal, while its musical language invites a wide circle of listeners.

FIVE DUO ALBUMS · INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS · BACH AWARD, CITY OF ERFURT

Two voices. A wider musical family.

A long-standing duo at the center of Markus Burger's exploration of spiritual repertoire.



“Markus Burger is a pianist for whom expressive sound is the essence of his style.”

Bösendorfer Artist Management
Excerpt from the artist endorsement

MARKUS BURGER

Piano · Composer · Project creator

A German-born pianist based in California, Burger brings European classical lyricism to contemporary jazz. A Bösendorfer Artist and professor at Fullerton College, he combines performance with guest lectures, clinics and cultural exchange.

JAN VON KLEWITZ

Saxophone

The Berlin-based saxophonist brings lyrical tone, expressive range and a keen sense of musical dialogue. His partnership with Burger is documented across five Spiritual Standards albums and extensive international touring.

BEYOND THE DUO

Voices, chamber ensembles & shared spiritual sources

Spiritual Standards is part of a broader artistic path. Burger also developed projects with the vocal Ensemble Alla Breve and the Athos Ensemble, bringing choral and ensemble perspectives to the encounter between musical heritage and improvisation.

Related collaborations with Ensemble Katharsis include saxophonist Simon Fluri, Dieter Oberdorfer and Hans Tutzer, among others. The album *Vesprae* also draws on spiritual source material. These projects extend the same artistic impulse into different combinations of voices and instruments.

An artist with international reach.

Concert pianist · Recording artist · Former record label executive · Educator



A CAREER IN MUSIC

Markus Burger

Director of Music Technology Studies

An internationally renowned concert pianist and Bösendorfer Artist, Burger brings the experience of a performer, producer, composer and educator to his work with cultural institutions around the world.

He has given more than 200 embassy concerts over the past 20 years, connecting musical excellence with cultural exchange and personal engagement.

200+

EMBASSY CONCERTS

19

ALBUMS AS LEADER

50+

ALBUMS PRODUCED

RECORDING, PRODUCTION & RECOGNITION

Burger's 19 albums as a leader are distributed worldwide. He has produced more than 50 albums for labels including Jazzline, New Morning Records, Challenge Records, ACM Records and Lipstick Records.

His recordings appeared on the Grammy ballot in 2006, 2007 and 2008. His honors include the Bach Award of the City of Erfurt and jazz youth awards in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate.

He founded the Wittlich International Jazz Festival and served for ten years on the board of Cologne's JazzHaus Initiative.

A lifetime of musical encounters.

Selected highlights from Markus Burger's broader international performing and recording career.



Photo: Silver Gutmann

CONCERT HALLS & SACRED SPACES

Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles
Morgan Library, J. P. Morgan's private study, New York
Bösendorfer Saal and Mozart Haus, Vienna
Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík
Cathedral of Brasília, Brazil
Philharmonic Hall, Kharkiv
Schloss Elmau, Germany
Theater Schaan, Liechtenstein

FESTIVALS & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

UCLA European Jazz Festival
Bach festivals in Leipzig and Arnstadt
Berlin Jazz Festival · Mosel Musikfestival
Merano · Mahler Festival, Dobbiaco
Schloss Goldrain, South Tyrol
Jazz festivals in Erfurt, Wittlich, St. Petersburg,
Donetsk, Kyiv, Bucharest, Sibiu and Cluj
Goethe-Institut: Paris, Boston and Los Angeles

SELECTED RECORDING & PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Kenny Wheeler · Brad Mehldau · Peter Erskine · Bob Magnusson · Joe LaBarbera · Norma Winstone · Charlie Mariano · Clark Terry · Jan von Klewitz · Chris Walden · Albert Mangelsdorff · Jim Linahon · Sherry Williams · Bill Yeager · Dieter Ilg · Wolfgang Haffner · John Tchicai · Doug Webb · Simon Phillips · Marshall Hawkins · Mat Marucci · Nicolas Simion

Tours across Africa, Russia, the United States, Brazil, Iceland and Ukraine complement extensive European appearances. Diplomatic engagements have included Paris, Vilnius, Lisbon, Reykjavík, Kyiv, Donetsk, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

A concert with a clear sense of place.

Flexible programming for diplomatic occasions, sacred spaces and public concert series.

CORE ENSEMBLE

Piano + saxophone

CONCERT LENGTH

60–90 minutes

OPTIONS

Workshop + dialogue

01 Embassies & consulates

A musical bridge between cultures

A program that introduces German musical heritage through a contemporary, approachable language. Suitable for public cultural events, diplomatic concert series and partnerships with local churches, cultural institutes or universities. Concerts can be paired with guest lectures, clinics and host-country collaborations designed to build lasting cultural connections.

02 Churches & sacred spaces

Reflection, resonance and renewal

Chorales, hymns and Bach-inspired repertoire presented with respect for the source material and the character of the space. The dialogue of piano and saxophone supports attentive listening and a contemplative atmosphere, welcoming both established concert audiences and visitors discovering the repertoire.

03 Advent & Christmas **Tradition heard afresh**

Seasonal programs draw on well-known German chorales, church songs and Christmas melodies. Recognizable themes meet the spontaneity of jazz, creating a festive concert with warmth, musical depth and space for reflection.

Program length, optional intermission, repertoire emphasis and local collaborations are agreed with the presenter. Piano, venue acoustics and technical needs are coordinated during booking.

Trusted by cultural hosts.

Selected excerpts from original recommendation letters. English translations from German.

MARSEILLE · GERMAN CONSULATE GENERAL

“Your arrangements of the most beautiful and best-known German chorales, church songs and Christmas songs connect Christian music and contemporary jazz. All guests were delighted by your performance and virtuosity.”

Jörg Grotjohann, Consul · 3 February 2026

BUCHAREST · GERMAN EMBASSY

“Planning, preparation and implementation of the project were harmonious and uncomplicated, not least because of your international experience and contacts, your exceptional communication skills and your personal approach.”

Dr. Peer Gebauer, Ambassador · 21 February 2025

SOFIA · GERMAN EMBASSY

“Before and during the visit, we experienced smooth, professional cooperation and an artist who adapted to local conditions with ease and flexibility.”

Irene Maria Plank, Ambassador · 20 January 2025

BISHKEK · GERMAN EMBASSY

“We thank you for the professional, friendly and uncomplicated cooperation, which we would recommend at any time.”

Constantin Zelenty, Deputy Head of Mission · 4 April 2025

The letters describe concert presentation, educational activity and the experience of working with the artists. Original recommendations are available on request.

Across borders. Beyond the concert.

Further recommendations from German diplomatic missions, including sacred-space performances.

REYKJAVÍK · GERMAN EMBASSY

“With your concert in Hallgrímskirkja, you impressively succeeded in taking your audience on a two-hour journey in this special place and, through your interpretation of hymns, bringing out the essence of spiritual music.”

Thomas H. Meister, Ambassador · 10 January 2014

ST. PETERSBURG · GERMAN CONSULATE GENERAL

“It was an extraordinary event in every respect. The hall was filled with enthusiastic listeners, and many weeks later guests were still speaking about the evening.”

Nikolai Stoikow · Letter of 9 February 2018

PARIS · GERMAN EMBASSY

“The concert succeeded impressively in bringing the audience closer to German church music through interpretation by church musician, classical scholar and jazz pianist Markus Burger.”

German Embassy Paris · Reproduced from the Markus Burger EPK

English excerpts from the supplied recommendations and EPK. Reykjavík is translated from the original German; St. Petersburg and Paris retain the English wording in the Luxury Edition. The two-hour duration refers to the Reykjavík concert.

A distinctive musical voice.

Press commentary, an industry endorsement and the artist's own perspective.

CAM MILLER · SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

“In jazz anything goes. Even Johann Sebastian Bach is fair game, according to the gospel of Markus Burger.”

CHRISTOPH SPENDEL · TASTENWELT

“Markus Burger has taken the meditative style of Ludovico Einaudi and transported it to a higher, more agile level. What makes this especially convincing are his honest, deeply personal compositions.”

BÖSENDORFER ARTIST MANAGEMENT

“Markus Burger is a pianist for whom expressive sound is the essence of his style, and we are pleased to count him among our exclusive circle of Bösendorfer artists.”

MARKUS BURGER · ARTIST STATEMENT

“I have always loved melodies that awaken inner images. I value silence as much as sound — the space between notes is where the music breathes. My motto has always been: less is more.”

Quotations reproduced from the supplied Markus Burger EPK. Christoph Spindel's review concerns The Vienna Sessions (tastenwelt 3/2022); it is presented here as commentary on Burger's wider artistry.

Five albums. One musical journey.

Markus Burger, piano · Jan von Klewitz, saxophone | Select a cover or listening link.



01 Spiritual Standards

The original album

[Listen on YouTube](#)



02 Secunda

The second chapter

[Listen on YouTube](#)



03 Tertia

The third chapter

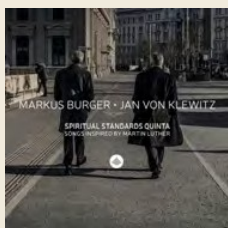
[Listen on YouTube](#)



04 Quarta

Songs from the New World

[Listen on YouTube](#)



05 Quinta

Songs Inspired by Martin Luther

[Listen on YouTube](#)

Related spiritual repertoire: Vesprae with Ensemble Katharsis. Additional recordings and project information are available through Markus Burger.

A visit with a lasting impact.

Performance, teaching and local collaboration can become one connected cultural program.



PROFESSOR · LECTURER · CLINICIAN

The artist as educator

Markus Burger can combine his performances with his work as a professor, guest lecturer and clinician. His experience at Fullerton College informs practical, accessible sessions for universities, conservatories, music schools and cultural institutions.

Workshops can explore Bach and jazz, improvisation for classical musicians, composition, music production and creative career development.

COLLABORATION IN THE HOST COUNTRY

Local encounters. Continuing connections.

Collaborations with musicians, choirs, ensembles and educators in the host country are actively sought. Joint rehearsals, workshops and shared performances can connect visiting artists with local musical traditions and creative communities.

The aim is a lasting effect beyond the concert: new artistic relationships, skills that participants can carry into their own work, and opportunities for future exchange. The format is developed with the host to reflect local interests, partners and resources.

CONCERT + MASTERCLASS: BUCHAREST

“With the concert and the accompanying training program, you not only provided musical enjoyment, but also created a lasting stimulus for the young music scene in Bucharest.”

Dr. Peer Gebauer · German Embassy, 21 February 2025 · Translation from German

Teaching that grows from practice.

Markus Burger · Director of Music Technology Studies · Professor at Fullerton College since 2005



Photo: Silver Gutmann

LEADERSHIP AT FULLERTON COLLEGE

A growing musical community

Burger led major upgrades to the piano studies area and took over the Music Technology program in 2009. Today, the program serves approximately 350 students and continues to grow.

LECTURES, GUEST TEACHING & CLINICS

His teaching experience spans universities, conservatories, colleges and summer academies in the United States and Europe.

San Diego State University (SDSU)

Graduate jazz composition and applied jazz piano

University of Lübeck, Germany

Prokofiev State Musical Academy, Donetsk

University of Dijon, France

Music Conservatory, Kyiv

Sacramento City College

Cosumnes River College

California State University, Sacramento

Folkwang School of the Arts, Essen

Conservatory of Vilnius, Lithuania

University of Porto, Portugal

Jazz School, Lisbon, Portugal

Idyllwild Summer Jazz Academy

City Conservatory of Cologne, Germany

Hertie School, Berlin, Germany

Summer Academy, Bucharest, Romania

Performances can be combined with guest lectures, masterclasses and clinics, creating an integrated visit for local students, musicians, educators and audiences.

Music, generosity and connection.

Concerts, guest lectures, clinics and collaborations shaped around your community.

A PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT

“You are amazing — a one-man entertainment machine with grace, talent, humility, and humor. You made so many people happy.”

Jorge Puente · Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

Personal endorsement of Markus Burger, reproduced from his supplied EPK.

Plan a concert. Build a partnership.

BOOKING & PRESS

Markus Burger

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spiritualstandards.com

markusburger.com

Please include preferred dates, city and venue, occasion and concert length, along with possible host-country partners for guest lectures, clinics or shared performances.